

## Message Text

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ACTION DHA-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 VO-03 CA-01  
INSE-00 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 /054 W  
-----040149 051029Z/21

R 031510Z NOV 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3155  
USMISSION GENEVA  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
USINT BAGHDAD  
INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

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ROME FOR INS REGIONAL DIRECTOR

EO 11652: NA  
TAGS/ SREF, OGEN, EUR/SE  
SUB: FURTHER INFLUX OF IRAQI ASSYRIAN CHRISTIANS AND ARMENIANS

1. THIS MESSAGE IS FOR PURPOSE OF ALERTING DEPARTMENT AND OTHER ADDRESSEES TO GROWING PRESENCE IN ATHENS OF IRAQI ASSYRIAN CHRISTIANS AND ARMENIANS, WHO UPON ARRIVAL HERE AS TOURISTS FROM BAGHDAD CLAIM REFUGEE STATUS BASED ON ASSERTED PERSECUTION IN IRAQ.

2. WE UNDERSTAND FROM UNHCR AND VOLAGS THAT THIS REPRESENTS CONTINUATION OF OUTFLOW FROM IRAQ OF CHRISTIAN MINORITIES WHO PREVIOUSLY TRAVELED TO BEIRUT. APPARENTLY OWING TO DISCONTINUATION OF REFUGEE PROGRAM AT BEIRUT, AND AWARE OF RECENT "OPERATION SAFEHAVEN" WHICH TRANSFERRED 2700 OF THEIR BRETHREN TO ATHENS SAFEHAVEN FOR VOLAG PROCESSING AND RESETTLEMENT, LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF OTHER IRAQIS HAVE OVER PAST 16 MONTHS LEFT IRAQ FOR ATHENS WITH HOPE OF BEING RESETTLED (MAINLY IN US) THROUGH AID OF UNHCR AND VOLAGS.

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3. A RECENT TELEGRAM FROM UNHCR (ATHENS) TO GENEVA IS SUCCINCT SUMMARY AND IS QUOTED IN PART: QUOTE RE MY TELCON PLEASE NOTE FOLLOWING UPDATE OF INFO CONCERNING ASSYRIAN CHRISTIANS AND ARMENIANS FROM IRAQ NOW IN GREECE. REGISTERED BY BOTH WCC AND ICMC 1831 PERSONS, OF WHOM 1638 ASSYRIAN CHRISTIANS, 193 ARMENIANS. DEPARTED TO DATE 142, COMPRISING 28 ARMENIANS, TO FOLLOWING COUNTRIES: 31 AUSTRALIA, 78 CANADA, 22 USA. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT CONTINU-

ING INFLUX, PRESENT CASELOAD IS BETWEEN 2,000 AND 2,200 PERSONS, WITH DETERIORATING MORALE AND BEGINNING OF MATERIAL DIFFICULTIES. INS STILL NOT AUTHORIZED TO ACT IN BEIRUT. PRIOR 1976 INS ALLOCATED 1200 TO 1500 CONDITIONAL ENTRY NUMBERS, OF WHICH 600 USED AT ATHENS (PRESUMABLY IN CONJUNCTION LAVRION REFUGEE CENTER) AND 600 TO 900 FOR OTHER 13 COUNTRIES UNDER INS ATHENS JURISDICTION, MOST OF WHICH ALLOTTED BEIRUT CASES. PENDING WCC AND ICMC CASELOADS ALREADY WITH EMBASSIES ARE AS FOLLOWS: AUSTRALIA 41 PERSONS, CANADA 88, AND USA 129. STAFF INCREASES FOR INS AND VOLAGS MAY BE NECESSARY IF MATTER TO BE ADEQUATELY CONTROLLED. UNQUOTE.

4. BASED ON OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE, AND VOLAG PERSONNEL FEW OF QUOTE REFUGEES UNQUOTE HAVE CONVINCING STORIES OF PERSECUTION WHICH WOULD ENTITLE THEM TO REFUGEE STATUS, AND GAIN FOR THEM ENTRY TO U.S., OR OTHER COUNTRIES, OTHER THAN AS IMMIGRANTS. ESTIMATES BY THESE OFFICIAL SOURCES ARE THAT OF PRESENT CASELOAD OF 2000 TO 2200 ONLY TEN PERCENT CAN BE CONSIDERED BONA FIDE REFUGEES, WITH REMAINING INDIVIDUALS APPARENTLY FALLING INTO CATEGORY OF ECONOMIC/SOCIAL MIGRANTS, AS SO WELL DESCRIBED IN BAGHDAD'S A-25 OF JUNE 13, 1977.

5. POSSIBILITY THAT ONLY LIMITED NUMBER WILL EVENTUALLY QUALIFY AS REFUGEES DOES NOT LESSEN PROBLEM FOR UNHCR AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES POSED BY INFLUX, NOR SOCIAL PROBLEM RELATED TO REJECTION SUCH LARGE NUMBERS OF APPLICANTS IN COUNTRY WHICH WILL NOT ITSELF RECEIVE IMMIGRANTS.

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6. UNHCR AND VOLAG REPRESENTATIVES THEREFORE HAVE RAISED QUESTION OF POSSIBLE REINSTITUTION OF INS PROCESSING AT BEIRUT, ASSERTING THAT LATTER WOULD REDIRECT MOVEMENT OF ARAB SPEAKING CHRISTIAN QUOTE REFUGEES UNQUOTE TO LEBANON, WHERE THOSE EVENTUALLY REFUSED RESETTLEMENT WOULD BE WITHIN REASONABLE DISTANCE OF HOMELAND, SHOULD THEY WISH TO RETURN, AND IF NOT, WOULD AT LEAST BE WITHIN ARAB-SPEAKING COMMUNITY WITH POSSIBILITY OF LOCAL ASSIMILATION.

7. ABOVE IS SUBMITTED FOR ADDRESSEES' INFORMATION AND COMMENTS CONCERNING ALLEGED IRAQI PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIAN MINORITIES, AND POSSIBLE REINSTITUTION OF INS VISITS TO BEIRUT FOR PURPOSE OF INTERVIEWING IRAQI APPLICATIONS FOR CONDITIONAL ENTRY THERE, RATHER THAN AT ATHENS.

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Review Markings:**  
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